



Wrigley Heights  
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o.com>

01/17/2004 11:57 PM

To: Angela\_Reynolds@longbeach.gov  
cc: district7@longbeach.gov, rgutmann@myrealbox.com,  
anitapet@yahoo.com  
Subject: DEIR-LA River Master Plan

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Report  
SCH 2-022396-1

Dear Ms. Reynolds:

Page 111 of the DEIR says: "However, the size of the proposed park project is not delineated in the Los Angeles River Master Plan. If a park use for the area is still feasible without the proposed project site, then the project could still be considered consistent with the Los Angeles River Master Plan."

I believe your assumption that the project could be considered consistent with the Master Plan is not supported by the evidence.

While it is true that the precise acreage is not spelled out in the Master Plan, page 8 of its maps section clearly shows that the plan refers to property between the Los Angeles River and Golden Avenue, extending from Wardlow Road almost to Baker Street.

It also has a line pointing to about the center of the Oil Operators' property saying, "PLANT TREES ON OPEN LAND."

Another line points to the northern part of the property and says, "OPEN LAND - CITY PROPOSED PARK."

And on page 9, a line points to the property north of Baker Street and says "OPEN LAND PROPOSED CITY PARK."

Clearly, putting 20 acres of self-storage there is not consistent with what this map shows.

In addition, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works webpage for the Los Angeles River Master Plan states:

"In 1991, after much attention to the river, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors directed the Departments of Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Regional Planning to develop the Los Angeles River Master Plan."

So the Department of Public Works (as stated just above) is one of the entities that developed this Master Plan. And here is what its website says about a project in Wrigley Heights:

"The 21-acre site is identified in the Los Angeles River Master Plan as one of the only places along the lower reaches of the Los Angeles River that is suitable for a major park. The site is adjacent to the River bikeway and equestrian trails in the City of Long Beach, between Wardlow Road and the 405 San Diego Freeway. Funding is required for acquisition,

D-1

development, and remediation of the site."

Richard Gutmann  
602 W. 37th Street  
Long Beach, CA 90806-1117

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**Richard Gutmann  
Response D**

- D-1 The Los Angeles River Master Plan was approved by the Los Angeles County Supervisors for long-term planning purposes and does not imply a land acquisition commitment. In Section III, Jurisdiction and Public Involvement, the Plan states "[t]he Master Plan suggests possible land uses and means of implementation, but does not infringe on local jurisdictions' authority or on the rights of private landowners."

The Draft EIR states that the Los Angeles River Master Plan does not delineate the size of a proposed park project in the vicinity of the proposed project. The Draft EIR acknowledges that ideally a future park development would include the proposed project site. Furthermore, the Draft EIR states that if a park use for the area is still feasible without the proposed project site, then the project would be considered consistent with the Los Angeles River Master Plan. However, if the park feasibility is compromised by the proposed project, then it would be deemed inconsistent with the Los Angeles River Master Plan.



Fady Mattar

01/23/2004 07:35 AM

To: Angela Reynolds/CH/CLB@CLB  
cc:  
Subject: DEIR for Oil Operators

Fady Mattar

----- Forwarded by Fady Mattar/CH/CLB on 01/23/2004 07:35 AM -----



Wrigley Heights  
<wrigleyheights@yahoo  
o.com>

01/23/2004 02:17 AM

To: Jerry\_Miller@longbeach.gov, Fady\_Mattar@longbeach.gov  
cc: district7@longbeach.gov, rgutmann@myrealbox.com  
Subject: DEIR for Oil Operators

PLEASE INCLUDE THIS LETTER IN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
REPORT SCH 2-022396-1

Dear Messrs. Miller and Mattar:

We would like to ask if each of you has actually read the Draft Environmental Impact Report for Oil Operators' self-storage project? Do both of you believe it is really an impartial disclosure document that provides decision makers with the necessary (and accurate) information to make good decisions?

For the reasons cited below, and others, we don't think this DEIR accomplishes that objective.

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (SCH 2-022396-1) for Oil Operators' self-storage project in Wrigley Heights is one-sided in the extreme.

E-1

The author goes to great lengths in a clearly prejudiced effort to convince readers that a massive self-storage facility will substantially improve the local environment. The writer even makes the incredible claim that a self-storage facility, larger by several times than any other business of its kind in Long Beach, Lakewood or Signal Hill, is the "Environmentally Superior" project when compared to a passive park. Such a conclusion is ludicrous. In addition, the reasons given for this conclusion are not, and cannot be, supported by the evidence.

For example, page 23 says that one of the reasons a passive park would not be the environmentally superior alternative is because "long-term traffic in the adjacent neighborhood would increase...."

Why does the author assume that the entrance to a passive park would have to be by automobile and through the local neighborhood? The park could have a bike trail and/or a footpath entrance connecting with the trail already on the Los Angeles River levee. Or it could join with Los Cerritos Park by a trail under the 405 Freeway where an overpass already exists. Neither alternative would produce much additional auto

traffic, either through the neighborhood or on Wardlow Road.

By contrast, the self-storage proposal is estimated to generate 1,290 trips each day in and out of a new driveway to be built on the Wardlow Road. This driveway would be about halfway up the bridge approach over the river. And traffic already backs up from Pacific Place to beyond this proposed driveway when Blue Line trains frequently cross Wardlow Road during the evening rush hour.

Any driveway out to Wardlow Road at this location would be very dangerous (a previous Environmental Impact Report [EIR-57-83] said it was not possible). So why does this DEIR assume a driveway there is okay for all the traffic that would be generated by 3,200 units of self-storage, but wouldn't be alright for the far fewer cars that would be entering or leaving a passive park, were it to even have an automobile entrance?

Again, regarding which project is better environmentally, wouldn't all the air pollution created by the large numbers of trucks and recreational vehicles that would go in, drive around inside, and possibly be left idling in a 20-acre facility, tend to make the passive park the environmentally superior? It certainly would be the better project in terms of air pollution. In fact, 20 acres of trees and plants could actually help improve air quality in the immediate area.

So why was none of this mentioned? It is obvious - this DEIR was produced with a predetermined objective: Make the self-storage project look better than a passive park.

For instance, also on page 23, the writer tries to persuade us that a park is the inferior project because of "noise from the use as it would not be bordered by a block wall."

Are we to believe that a passive park couldn't also have a wall? Or would even need one? Local residents have been meeting with city officials for five years to get something like a nature center, not a bunch of noisy soccer fields, baseball diamonds or basketball courts. And anyone who has ever walked through the nature center our city provided for East Long Beach, knows how contrived an EIR would have to be in order to portray 3,200 units of self storage as being environmentally superior to anything even remotely resembling the nature center.

Please note that when referring to a passive-park alternative to the new active-recreation park proposed for 55th Way in North Long Beach, that DEIR (SCH 2003041142) says:

"A passive park would not likely result in noise occurrences. Beneficial impacts are anticipated."

Wouldn't this also be the case in the Wrigley area?

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The 55th Way project is for an active-recreation park.

While be no scheduled league activities will be allowed, there will still be excited (and loud) teams playing baseball, soccer, and basketball. Friends will be cheering them on. Because the park is to be built on a landfill, the playing surface will be almost as high as the roofs of adjacent houses. It will be hidden from the street by an active warehouse. Methane gas will be escaping from the ground. Provision must be made for tremendous rainwater runoff because the landfill must be sealed and will not absorb water as other parks do.

Still the DEIR finds that most of this project's problems are fairly easily mitigated while much simpler problems in Wrigley Heights are treated as "deal breakers" for putting a park there. Why? Because the city clearly wants the one project and not the other.

Returning to the Oil Operators' DEIR, and its arguments against a passive-park in Wrigley Heights:

"In addition, public services could be impacted by increased police calls because of the remoteness of the [park] site."

Remote? The entire site is highly visible from busy Wardlow Road. On page 49, the DEIR even states: "Views of the construction area would be prominent for travelers eastbound and westbound on Wardlow Road."

And there is a service road parallel to Wardlow Road that goes directly to the site and could be used by police for quick access.

Two more reasons are given for why a park is environmentally inferior to storage:

"... the timing of the remediation of the entire site [for a park] would be uncertain."

"In addition, this use [park] would not ensure that the site was completely remediated to RWQCB standards."

These arguments are specious. Well over five years ago, the community was told, in writing, that the entire site could be cleaned up in 6 months. And to residential standards! After residents persuaded the City Council to require an EIR before allowing any project, interestingly, Oil Operators abandoned its plans to build homes. Now it says it will take at least two years just to clean up the ponds - and only to self-storage cleanup levels.

So it is most unfair for the DEIR to conclude that a self-storage project would be completed in a timely fashion, but a park would not be. That is clearly something the writer does not know. In fact, it could be argued that just the opposite

might be true.

Those times when the DEIR just can't avoid referring to some obviously negative aspect of the proposed storage project, it invariably follows with a "but" and then does its best to minimize what it just said.

For these and other reasons, we do not believe this DEIR meets the CEQA-required test of a "good faith effort at full disclosure."

A committee of residents has been meeting with city officials and staff for five years, yet many of their long-expressed concerns are still not addressed in this document. This includes some questions that were directly asked, and supposedly written down by staff at the March 12, 2003 "scoping session" for subsequent inclusion in the DEIR.

Examples include: Wasn't this wastewater treatment plant accepting wastes from many kinds of businesses such as refineries, gasoline plants, cleaning plants and oil recyclers - not just produced water from oil wells as claimed in the documents supplied by Oil Operators?

(We have documents showing that it was.)

And did the former Petrolane-Lomita gasoline plant at 2901 Orange Avenue (at Spring Street) use hexavalent chromium in its cooling tower? [It was a common practice.]

Petrolane-Lomita was one of the facilities that was sending wastewater to Oil Operators in Wrigley Heights according to the 1983 Environmental Impact Report (EIR-57-83) for a proposed project on Golden Avenue. Petrolane-Lomita's use of Oil Operators treatment plant was not disclosed in the DEIR; nor was the fact that McAuley Oil Company, a Signal Hill waste oil recycler, also used the wastewater facility. (Again we have documentation to support this.)

At a January 12, 2004, meeting with city officials and staff, there were continued attempts to avoid many of the residents' concerns in the EIR. And the strategy employed is quite transparent: "How the environment affects the project won't be included in the EIR."

The city's Acting Environmental Officer noted that the only purpose of the EIR is "...what the current project right now, what building impacts...it doesn't talk about all the problems you are having." She added that the EIR examines how the project affects the environment, NOT how the environment affects the project. Earlier, the city's new liaison with the Wrigley Heights Community had stressed this same point.

Residents understand that an EIR's purpose is to examine how the project affects the environment. But this can't be done in a vacuum. How can you know the consequences of building a storage facility over contaminated land if you don't really know what the

treatment plant that was there actually processed and what chemicals to look for? And how much contamination remains on the site?

How can you know the result of adding an estimated 1,290 daily car trips to local intersections if you don't accurately know the current traffic situation? And it's clear the city doesn't know. The traffic consultant has produced three different versions with widely varying results. Each time our city has defended the results as accurate. They can't all be. And yet the DEIR didn't include even a mention of the numerous letters residents have sent to the city traffic engineer over the years asking for some relief from the traffic congestion caused by the Blue Line.

How can you know the effect on residents' health from releasing chemicals during the cleanup of the property, if you don't know how much of what chemicals people have already been exposed to from this site?

Again, what possible good is an environmental study that doesn't include the problems you are already having for use as a baseline?

CEQA makes clear that to evaluate the consequences of a project, an EIR "...must permit the significant effects of the project to be considered in the full environmental context."

See CEQA, Title 14, Chapter 3, Article 9, Section 15125 (c).

In addition, the city's definition of what constitutes a "significant" traffic impact doesn't provide decision makers with "information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes an account of environmental consequences" as required by CEQA. (Page 25 of DEIR)

By using a definition that says additional traffic from a project is "not significant" unless it is 2 percent or more of the actual capacity of an intersection, our city is, in effect, saying there is no environmental consequence to repeatedly adding 2 per cent more traffic - forever!

Maybe the lack of objectivity in these DEIRs is best demonstrated with this line from the 55thWay report: "It has been suggested that the proposed park will serve as a significant amenity to the area and may indirectly result in rent increases...." Really? A noisy park on a 10- to 15-foot high landfill will actually do that? To be consistent and fair, shouldn't the Oil Operators' DEIR have said that a passive park would send Wrigley Heights' property values skyrocketing?

Finally, we realize that people who don't like particular projects always attack the EIR. But this is way beyond just not liking the project - which we definitely don't. Residents are not oblivious to the realities of politics and always knew that Gerry Felgemaker, the city's former environmental officer,

would probably back City Hall's position when push came to shove. But he never produced anything we know of to even compare with this DEIR in terms of an obviously predetermined outcome.

We look forward to your responses to our questions regarding the quality of this document.

And we ask that the City Manager agree to meet with a few of the residents from Wrigley Heights so that they can personally show him numerous relevant and important documents that did not make it into the DEIR.

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**Richard Gutmann  
Letter E**

The author wished that this letter to Mr. Miller and Mr. Mattar be included as part of the record. It is not a comment that requires CEQA response.